

MINUTES

MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 57th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE ADMINISTRATION

Call to Order: By **CHAIRMAN SYLVIA BOOKOUT-REINICKE**, on March 15, 2001 at 5:15 P.M., in Room 455 Capitol.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Rep. Sylvia Bookout-Reinicke, Chairman (R)
Rep. Joe Tropila, Vice Chairman (D)
Rep. Norma Bixby (D)
Rep. Edith Clark (R)
Rep. Dave Lewis (R)
Rep. Gay Ann Masolo (R)
Rep. Trudi Schmidt (D)
Rep. David Wanzenried (D)

Members Excused: None.

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Marilyn Miller, Committee Secretary

Please Note: These are summary minutes. Testimony and discussion are paraphrased and condensed.

Committee Business Summary:

Hearing(s) & Date(s) Posted: SB 419, 3/10/2001; HB 144,
3/10/2001

Executive Action:

HEARING ON SB 419

Senator Duane Grimes introduced **Senate Bill 419**, which would revise the legislative intern program by providing a daily allowance for interns and to more clearly outline intern qualifications .

Proponents: None

Opponents: None

Information: None

Questions:

Representative Masolo asked how many legislative interns are currently working. **Senator Grimes** responded that there have been as many as ten during the 1970s but that currently legislators have to pay their interns out of their own funds. He added that this bill would raise the intern program to a new level.

Representative Wanzenried asked whether interns would be paid as employees and whether that could create problems. **Senator Grimes** answered that this would not constitute a salary. LSD Director Lois Menzies said the allowance would not be salary and would not be per diem such as paid to legislators.

Representatives Schmidt and **Lewis** both raised questions about the employer/employee question.

Senator Grimes closed the hearing by giving his opinion that the proposal would be a seed bill for a very good internship relationship with the University System.

HEARING ON HB 144

Representative Mark Noennig reported that this bill would eventually result in statewide television coverage of the legislature and its hearings, hopefully beginning in the next session. He gave a history of a study conducted during the previous interim. **EXHIBIT(leh59a01)** **Rep. Noennig** said the project needs \$1.3 million to get up and running but that an amendment proposed today would reduce the fiscal note to \$50,000 to enable the division to seek grants, gifts, donations and in-kind contributions from private and federal sources. **EXHIBIT(leh59a02)**

Proponents:

Senator Debbie Shea talked about her experience being part of the project. She emphasized the project's ability to bring rural Montana into the legislative process.

Other proponents included Susan DeCamp, Executive Director, Billings Cable Television. She noted that their telecasts of city council and school board meetings have received great support in the Billings area.

Jim Smith, lobbyist, Helena; Wade Wilkinson, Helena; Brian Cameron of the Montana League of Women Voters; Steve Yeakel, Montana Society of Association Executives; Tom Harrison, Montana Cable Telecommunications Association; Mary Whittinghill, Montana Taxpayers Association; and Webb Brown, Montana Chamber of Commerce also supported the statewide broadcasting program.

Rep. Tom Facey noted that, as the original sponsor of HJ 18 in the 1999 session, he would like to see the process move along and hopes that the bill will keep the project alive.

Opponents: None.

Information: None.

Questions:

Rep. Dave Lewis asked whether an amendment to place a fee on lobbyists to support the project would be workable. Lobbyists in the audience offered a measure of support for this idea.

Rep. Joe Tropila asked LSD staff member Steven Maly to introduce the staff members who have worked on the project. Mr. Maly introduced staff members present at the meeting.

Rep. Noennig closed the hearing by remarking that people do watch the legislature and would profit by this opportunity.

Rep. Lewis outlined a conceptual amendment to charge a fee of \$200 for all lobbyists per session, which would be dedicated to the television project. A State Special Revenue account would be set up with the authority to spend the \$50,000 loan.

Rep. Edith Clark moved the bill do pass.

Rep. Dave Wanzenried talked about two problems: whether the first collections would be for the 2003 session and who would collect these funds. **Rep. Wanzenried** made a substitute motion to wait until the next meeting to make a decision on this bill.

Ms. Menzies noted that she would also bring additional information on SB 419 to the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 5:50 P.M.

REP. SYLVIA BOOKOUT-REINICKE, Chairman

MARILYN MILLER, Secretary

SB/MM

EXHIBIT (leh59aad)